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ABSTRACT

Since Coastline Community College (CCC) opened in Fall 1976, CCC has served as a model for the community-based, "college beyond walls" movement. CCC, which has no physical campus, uses 127 existing facilities throughout its service area, including public and private buildings, homes, and businesses. Besides eliminating high construction costs, the use of these facilities allows CCC to reach students who cannot or will not come to a campus. The college employs six operational guidelines for the implementation of community education: (1) a flexible, administrative structure organized along geographic, rather than program, lines: (2) a policy of open access to all population segments: (3) a flexible curriculum to meet the degree and/or personal interest needs of the heterogeneous student body: (4) the use of diverse modes of instruction, such as television, mail, newspapers, and independent study packages: (5) the development of a varied, fully-credentialed, part-time faculty: and (6) the recognition of the concept of lifelong learning through procedures designed to award credit for experiential learning. The emulation of these policies at other community colleges testifies to CCC's success and to the continued trend toward the interface of college and community. (JP)

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COASTLINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

AN IDEA BEYOND TRADITION

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Introduction

Coastline Community College opened in the fall of 1976 with 18,574 students, the largest opening enrollment ever for any new college in the United States. Since opening four years ago, 165,000 different individuals have attended Coastline; yet the college has no physical campus. Coastline's success has clear implications as a model for community-based education in the future.

An analysis of the success factors of this community-based institution bring forth the following notable characteristics which are interwoven throughout the discussion in this paper.

1. Commitment and support of the Board of Trustees.
2. Focus and flexibility of administration. Full attention to community-based locations.
3. Decentralized administrative structure. Grass roots administration tailored and responsive to each community.
4. Use of community facilities/dispersed learning centers.
5. Neighborhood learning centers. Special use of closed elementary schools as neighborhood adult learning centers.
6. Decentralized library and staff services.
7. Primarily part-time faculty. Not related to the noncampus concept, this predominance relates to flexibility and responsiveness.
8. Academic senate. Coastline has the only academic senate in California comprised primarily of part-time faculty with full representation.
9. Credit for experience. This special program, through a portfolio course and equivalent credit for licensed occupations, is a national model.
10. Telecourses. Broadcast courses are a significant and successful dimension of the Coastline programs, with the college having the largest telecourse enrollment of any single college in the United States.
11. Access to nonbroadcast independent study. In-plant, newspaper, and nonbroadcast courses are important to diversity of access and to the emerging new dimension of independent study.
12. Emeritus Institute. This senior citizens program has been a national model.

Emergence From A Continuing Trend

The roots of Coastline are firmly planted in the historical contribution and mission of the comprehensive community college and also in the new emerging trend toward expansive, open, community-based education. Clearly, community-based education is not a quantum leap in educational programming, but one phase in a trend which has been under way for 50 years in the United States generally, and more particularly in California.

In addition, the campus-based college has served us well and will continue to serve, as far as I can see into the future. But problems of high cost of construction, new developments in technology and learning psychology, changing population demands of the new clientele point to new needs for new dimensions in learning--both in scope and access. We know now, for example, that some find the physical institution itself a barrier; others, because of their busy lifestyles, can participate only if opportunities fit their own patterns of daily living; for some, new forms are simply more convenient or desirable--for a variety of reasons. It is clear that new patterns will emerge and, with them, new mechanisms to serve them.

The 1980's may yield a new phase in the "communitization" of education through the concept of community-based education, which stresses the interfacing of college and community. Some colleges will become community embracing, i.e., expansive rather than only campus inclusive. Or, in many cases, new and separate institutions, such as Coastline, will emerge. These institutions will be united in their diversity.

The new college dimension will exist wherever teachers and learners gather together, and sometimes where learners make it on their own, in public and private buildings, homes, and business premises. For the new colleges, the

curriculum will be as broad as the substance of life or as narrow as one person's interests. It will tend to grow out of the dimensions of the community--business, political, and social. In this new form, the student will not go to "the college"--the college will go out toward the student; and they will come together as partners within the concept of access. These new colleges will not offer programs on a take-it-or-leave-it basis but will build curriculum in dialogue with students. And, the students will be the citizens.

Let me be clear, not all colleges need to change. Many serve well in meeting needs that they were designed to serve. It is in addressing new and unmet needs that these new structures and new access forms will emerge. Basically, there will be more institutions--not fewer; more people being served--not fewer; and society, as it always does, will give birth to new social inventions to serve social needs. Clearly, this is the philosophy which gave birth to Coastline.

This new college is committed to remove obstacles wherever feasible. The community is its campus, both physically and philosophically. The college nurtures the community and is, in turn, sustained by it. Like most ideals, this concept may never be fully attained and compromises may be required in order to meet both fiscal exigencies and conflicting demands of local, state, and national agencies. This, however, is the inspiration which has guided Coastline in its formative years, with the blessing of a far-seeing board of trustees, as it has strived to fulfill its mission--to provide every individual with the opportunity for appropriate quality education up to the limits of his or her potential by making diverse educational opportunities available to all adults who are interested.

Orchestration

To develop a mission statement and ideal is one thing; to put it into practice is a much greater challenge. As previously noted, when it opened in the fall of 1976, Coastline admitted 18,574 students, the largest opening enrollment ever of any new college in the nation; and since that time, 165,000 different students have attended. The majority of learners have been part-time, taking an average of 6.5 units of credit each and averaging 40 years of age. These figures clearly indicate the pressure which Coastline was under to establish and sustain a base of operations. Among operational guidelines formulated to implement the concept of community-based education, of which Coastline is one archetype, are the following which will each be discussed: (1) dispersed learning centers, (2) flexible administrative structure, (3) open access, (4) flexible programs, (5) diverse access systems, (6) diverse teaching faculty, and (7) integration of life and learning (lifelong learning).

Dispersed Learning Centers

At the outset Coastline ruled out all possibility of acquiring and operating a central campus--the community itself would be the campus. By utilizing existing public and private facilities within the district during hours they are vacant and by leasing three elementary schools that were closed because of declining student enrollment and turning them into adult neighborhood learning centers, an estimated $60 million in 1976 dollars (or $100 million in 1979) that it would have cost to construct a physical campus was saved.

In spring of 1980, for example, classes were conducted in 127 locations, slightly more than one for every square mile of the college service area, in places like office buildings, banks, park recreation centers, neighborhood

schools, community centers, private businesses, convalescent hospitals, senior citizens centers, apartment complexes, and mobile home parks, wherever there was need and appropriate space.

With no formal campus, provision was made for a bookstore and library services. Once again, this was accomplished through the cost effective use of existing community facilities. All Coastline students may use the Huntington Beach Public Library, the Orange Coast College Library, the Golden West College Library (libraries of her two Coast District sister colleges), and a variety of other county libraries. Books may be purchased from a bookstore located in a shopping center. As with other new thrusts, this new concept of locating the bookstore in a shopping center has worked well.

A central Instructional Media Services facility, which provides both audio-visual support materials and document reproduction, is located within the Huntington Beach Public Library, a city library. Operated by Coastline in cooperation with the library and the city of Huntington Beach, the center also provides materials for other local nonprofit organizations.

As well as the initial capital savings, another advantage in not having a permanent campus is that Coastline is able to act as an organic unit, expanding or contracting facilities as the need arises; but the primary justification for dispersion of facilities is to penetrate the community and provide learning opportunities at places convenient to the students. Thus, it is important to avoid the temptation to acquire facilities as the opportunity arises without regard to the nature of the program to be housed in them and the clientele for whom the program is designed.

Flexible Administrative Structure

Several authorities in the field of educational administration have noted that administrative structures have a tendency to become institutionalized and incapable of change. When this happens, there is an ever-present danger of goal displacement, whereby the internal energy used by the organization to maintain itself becomes disproportionately large compared to its productive output. Disciplinary-based departments within colleges and universities are particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon. For this and other reasons, there are no departments at Coastline, program administration being structured along geographic lines. The geographic structure is well suited to the decentralized community-based concept.

The community-based campus is divided into four geographical areas, and each area is headed by an associate dean who is located strategically within the area. He or she is charged with the responsibility for developing personal contacts with potential instructors and client groups.

The associate deans are given the power to develop educational programs consistent with the needs of the overall adult population in their areas. Each associate dean reports directly to the dean of instruction, each is responsible for the working operation of up to 350 class offerings, and each may have 5,000-6,000 students meeting at between 30 and 80 different locations.

In an attempt to stay "on top" of the ever-changing needs in their communities, the associate deans routinely mail questionnaires to the residents of their communities asking their advice about how to improve educational offerings. Sometimes community coffees and meetings are held to provide collective feedback.

The college has a central office which acts as the locus of administration and program planning and delivery. A flat organizational structure

has been created to maximize communication with the office of the president. Team meetings are held on a regular basis in which various strategic linkage persons serve to facilitate coordination between administrative divisions. The college has created about twelve positions at the associate dean level (including the four area associate deans). This has facilitated the rotation of responsibilities, both within the central office and between the central office and area offices. The senior officers have the opportunity to experience different aspects of the college's operations, which leads to personal growth, greater sensitivity to the college's ultimate purposes, and a sense of commitment to the institution as a whole rather than to one office or role in its administrative structure.

The fluidity of the administrative structure enables the college to address itself to changing demands and circumstances. For example, an associate dean has been re-deployed during the last year to work almost exclusively on curriculum building. In the near future the need for a fifth geographical operating area will necessitate the assignment of an associate dean to serve as its chief administrator.

Open Access

There are two primary determinants of accessibility. One is the availability of programs suited to the needs of the learners; the other is the feasibility of participation by the learners. A college has not achieved open access if it designs programs for a specific target group--the poor, for example--but fails to consider physical and psychological barriers confronting the students. Both dimensions require attention.

California is fortunate in that it established early the provision of free education as a citizen's right. Most courses of instruction are tuition-free, and a variety of financial support programs are administered through the

college. Day-care centers are located throughout the district and, in some instances--for example, parent education--parents and children learn together. The fact that many courses are offered in the evenings helps to remove time conflicts in the case of working students. The flexibility of programs and use of all forms of delivery, which are crucial to open access, are discussed in subsequent sections.

One result of an open access policy is the heterogeneous nature of the student population, which ranges from young students who are concurrently attending high school to senior citizens and, on another dimension, from the functionally illiterate to aerospace engineers with Ph.D.'s. Thus, it is often found expedient to deal collectively with students classified by some important characteristic. An example may help to illustrate this approach.

Coastline has established a special program (the Emeritus Institute) devoted to meeting learning needs of the older population. More than 200 classes of special interest to seniors were offered during 1979. In addition to its programming function, the institute serves as a coordinating agency, working closely with other social agencies providing services to the elderly. An interesting and valued by-product of the program is the recent establishment of a program in gerontology, co-sponsored and offered by Coastline and the University of California, Irvine (UCI). This two-year program offers professional training in a range of service areas dealing with senior citizens.

Flexible Programs

Coastline offers a comprehensive program ranging from university transfer, through technical-vocational certificates (such as plastics technology), to general interest courses including courses for coping and everyday living. Virtually any course may be offered if it is approved by the state, can attract sufficient enrollees to make it cost-effective in terms of the

level of state funding it will generate, and if suitable instruction is available. Considerable latitude in programming decisions devolves upon the college which, as a result, is encouraged to adopt a fairly aggressive marketing posture.

Students may participate in any courses which interest them without necessarily aiming towards a degree or certificate, but many students reformulate their goals after their initial course experiences and embark upon a sequenced program. Many do not and never will.

In this open entrepreneurial system the use of curriculum advisory committees assumes great importance. The previously discussed Emeritus Institute is an example of such a body. Curriculum advisory committees have been formed to advise area associate deans, and each major occupational program is monitored by an advisory committee whose members are drawn from the given business or industry.

Diverse Access Systems

More than 20 percent of all Coastline students are enrolled for credit study in broadcast television courses (telecourses). About ten such courses are offered several times each week over the college district-owned and operated public television station (KOCE Channel 50). Many of the telecourses are designed and produced by the college district, while a few are obtained from other colleges who, with Coastline, are members of a television consortium.

Television-based courses have the potential of reaching large numbers of students. These courses offer a vastly expanded educational dimension, tend to attract new students to the college, and provide a high visibility public relations exposure for the college, since the number of casual viewers of course segments is vastly greater than the actual course takers.

Courses operate within the division of Coordinated Instructional Systems, and each course is a complete learning system including a textbook, study guide, and various assignments. Each telecourse has a learning manager who maintains telephone contact with the students, and an array of support services is provided.

Research has shown that over 60 percent of students take telecourses to help them reach a degree objective. An increasing number, though, list personal enrichment or professional advancement as the primary objective. A broad range of subjects is offered including horticulture, biology, psychology, and astronomy. Popularized titles are used with these courses, such as "Home Gardening" and "As Man Behaves." The content in these courses parallels campus course counterparts.

Each semester has brought evidence that the use of television for college-level education is both desirable and effective. Broadcast courses seem especially attractive to students who are older, married, responsible for dependents in their homes, and/or working full time; a majority of working adults have children under 18 years of age.

Other nontraditional delivery systems are used at Coastline but reach a smaller number of students than telecourses. These include courses by newspaper and by mail, four videocassette courses, and two business management courses based on independent study packages.

Independent study courses at Coastline are one primary delivery mode in reaching students, numerically speaking, and comprise a key component that is expected to grow significantly during the 80's. As noted in Coastline's first accreditation report (1978):

> The college has made a breakthrough in assisting students involved in media-oriented and independent study programs by faculty who are termed "learning managers." The procedures and support services for students studying by television, newspaper, and self-paced instruction are outstanding contributions to contemporary learning-at-a-distance efforts and are a fine example of what Coastline does especially well.

Diverse Teaching Faculty

It is a truism that ultimately a college is only as good as its faculty. No matter how sophisticated a packaged program may be, it still requires some human element in its delivery even though it is only a distant voice on the telephone. A human moderator is always necessary to provide feedback, encouragement, and assistance. In a regular classroom instructional mode the importance of having a sensitive, informed, and well-prepared teacher is obvious. Coastline is fortunate in that its pool of potential teachers is as broad and deep as the community.

Coastline employs over 700 faculty members, with all but a small percentage employed as part-time instructors. Half of these are career educators also teaching at other institutions, and the other half are professionals working in the fields they teach. The student response to the professionals has been strongly supportive, with many voicing the opinion that it is extremely valuable to learn from someone who is active in his field.

As a safeguard to students and to protect them from incompetent instructors, each faculty member or supervisor, part-time or full-time, must have a California credential before being employed in a college. The credential is based mainly on formal education in one's field of study, work experience, and teaching experience.

Most community colleges in California have established an academic senate (or faculty council) to act as the spokesman for faculty in professional matters. Until recently, the state Education Code ruled out the participation of part-time faculty in such bodies, but at the insistence of Coastline, the law has been amended to permit full participation by all faculty members. Coastline has an active senate comprised almost entirely of part-time instructors.

Lifelong Learning

The concept of lifelong education may be viewed as an umbrella covering everything from traditional education to career training to horizon broadening and enrichment to coping with life.

This type of learning happens on the job and at home, as well as in the classroom situation. Adults need institutions powered to support such learning, whether it be a course or workshop experience or as a part of a more formalized educational program leading to a certificate or a degree.

The relevance of Coastline's programs to the world of work is apparent from its courses in 27 occupational programs. Coastline also has developed procedures for awarding credit for experiential learning under controlled circumstances. A special portfolio has been developed including a means of evaluating experiences in all occupational fields where a state agency awards a license. This course provides new opportunities and motivation for many in middle management and licensed occupations.

These individuals are awarded college credits for skills they already have acquired, or may be able to acquire, on the job. Among the programs offered are: accounting, administrative secretary, business marketing and management, general office practice, legal secretary, personnel associate, sales and marketing management, and travel agency operation. In addition, a means of awarding credit for experience has been established in fields where state licenses are granted.

After completing the requirements of the Experiential Learning Program, a large percentage of these adult learners go on to obtain advanced degrees at other institutions and many receive promotions in their jobs.

Conclusion

Distance learning and open learning are terms which have crept into our lexicon and conjure up images of sophisticated learning packages and technological delivery systems such as broadcast television. These may indeed be important aids to delivery of educational services but represent only one aspect of distance learning. The concept of the community-based college is one which almost makes distance learning a nonissue because the college permeates the community; the college exists where the learning occurs so it is not appropriate to consider how to take the learning from here (the college) to there (the students beyond the walls). The very notion of distance implies from a point to a point. The issue, therefore, is who is distant? The knowledge from the student or the student from the institution?

A model for community-based education has been proposed and illustrated by reference to Coastline. The components of the model provide clear evidence of commitment to providing learning services to all citizens who can benefit; and characteristics such as dispersed learning centers, flexible administrative structure, open access, flexible programs, diverse access systems, diverse teaching faculty, and integration of life and learning are symbolic of that thrust. These institutionally expansive characteristics appear to have relevance for both developing and technologically sophisticated societies, although the expression of the model would vary greatly from place to place. The emergence of this model does not imply replacement of other institutional forms which are serving well. This thrust offers a new dimension in adult learning.

Commitment to expansiveness, to the concept that education is to learning as learning is to living, undergirds the principle of comprehensiveness. That the community itself is the campus provides a new dimension for the definition

of distance education. That knowledge is portable, pliable, and can even fly through the air provides opportunity for diversity. Finally, convenience and access in forms which may easily be touched by the learner characterize this new model.

Certainly, if emulation is the sincerest form of flattery, the college is on the right track. Rio Salada Community College in Arizona replicates the Coastline model, both in its structure and programs--so does the new Open College of DuPage in Illinois. And recently Chancellor Leslie Koltai of Los Angeles announced the soon-to-be-established Los Angeles Metropolitan Community College, another "college beyond walls."

Moreover, the "open" movement is worldwide, as evidenced by the 50 nations participating in the recent conference on open learning held at England's British Open University. The author noted a variety of such institutions functioning worldwide, including Everyman's University in Israel; the Open Universities of Germany, France, and Spain; and the Open Learning Institute in Canada, just to note a few.

As far as Coastline goes, the most notable remark about the college was made by NBC news correspondent Bill Windsor, who observed as he reported Coastline as "a simple idea, a new idea, an idea whose time has come" and further stated that Coastline's strongest testimonial is that "it is the citizens themselves who have responded."

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